

RE: s.38 **GAC Update (Feb. 17)**

From: "Beaulieu, Sebastien -NGA" </o=dfait-maeci/ou=exchange administrative group (fydibohf23spdl)/cn=recipients/cn=8a3a5272e45440ffa3bcfddde1740d43-beaulis">
To: *USS-DMA Advisors/Conseillers <d-uss-dmaadvisors@international.gc.ca>
Cc: "Grant, Michael -NGM" <michael.grant@international.gc.ca>, "Vanderloo, Caroline -NGM" <caroline.vanderloo@international.gc.ca>, "Vézina, Catherine -NGA" <catherine.vezina@international.gc.ca>, "Pharand, Marc-Andre -NGA" <marc-andre.pharand@international.gc.ca>, "Cheung-Gertler, Jasmin -IRZ" <jasmin.cheung-gertler@international.gc.ca>
Date: Thu, 17 Feb 2022 18:02:17 +0000

RESEND: Apologies.
With a third Talking Point.
S.

From: Beaulieu, Sebastien -NGA
Sent: February 17, 2022 12:48 PM
To: *USS-DMA Advisors/Conseillers <D-USS-DMAAdvisors@international.gc.ca>
Cc: Grant, Michael -NGM <Michael.Grant@international.gc.ca>; Vanderloo, Caroline -NGM <Caroline.Vanderloo@international.gc.ca>; Vézina, Catherine -NGA <Catherine.Vezina@international.gc.ca>; Pharand, Marc-Andre -NGA <Marc-Andre.Pharand@international.gc.ca>; Cheung-Gertler, Jasmin -IRZ <Jasmin.Cheung-Gertler@international.gc.ca>
Subject: s.38 GAC Update (Feb. 17)

The daily blockades update, ahead of s.38
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Approved: NGM/M.Grant.

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Talking Point:

- Continue to track reactions and developments in the U.S. and internationally.
 - Critical right-wing reactions of the Government of Canada – and support for the protesters – in the U.S. point to Canada being pulled in to the deep polarization of U.S. politics.
 - Missions in the U.S. have received a number of calls in support of the protests and criticizing the government's approach and at least one mission (Dallas) has received threatening messages. They are coordinating with US protocol and RCMP in WSHDC.
1. **Canada-US Engagement:**
 - 16 U.S. Republican governors of states, together with Premiers Kenney and Moe, released a letter to PM Trudeau and President Biden, calling for an end for mandated COVID-19 vaccines for cross-border truckers. (Letter attached.)
 - TC Minister Alghabra is scheduled to have separate virtual meetings with the Governor of Montana Greg Gianforte and North Dakota Governor Doug Bergum today (both signatories to the PM-POTUS letter).
 2. **US Political Reactions to Canadian Measures:** U.S. reactions across the political spectrum point to Canada being pulled in to the deep U.S. polarization.

Our US network is receiving calls and letters. The recurring theme to these calls is concern over the *Emergencies Act* being invoked. Most called for an open dialogue between the PM and the protesters to resolve this situation.

3. **Threats in DALAS:** On the evening of February 16 (afterhours), DALAS received two threatening messages from American citizens. DALAS escalated the issue to diplomatic police and RCMP colleagues in WSHDC, who are now investigating the matter. In an abundance of caution, staff have been asked to work from home today, pending guidance from authorities.
4. **Governors & Premiers Letter to PM & POTUS:** There is significant social media around the attached letter addressed to President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau from AB Premier Jason Kenney, SK Premier Scott Moe, and 16 (of 27) U.S. Republican governors:
 - “Today, I joined 16 United States Governors and Premier Kenney to call on the Prime Minister and the President of the United States to immediately reinstate the vaccine and quarantine exemptions for truckers.” – Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe
 - “Today, I've signed a letter along with @PremierScottMoe, @GovGianforte and 15 other American governors urging President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau to drop the cross-border vaccine mandate for truckers. It's bad public health theatre and it needs to go.” – Alberta Premier Jason Kenney
 - “What we're seeing in Canada makes me grateful for our American rights, freedoms, and liberties – including the right to peaceably assemble, freedom of speech, and our guarantee of due process.” & “Truckers work hard every day to keep goods moving and our shelves stocked. We can't afford to lose them, especially with our supply chains broken. It's time @JoeBiden and @JustinTrudeau act to end the mandates and get them back on the road. – Governor Greg Gianforte (R-MT)
 - “As Governor, I will always support both American and Canadian truckers in their fight for freedom and personal liberty.” & “@JustinTrudeau and @JoeBiden should immediately reinstitute vaccine and quarantine exemptions for cross-border truckers. In the middle of a supply chain crisis, these mandates are only causing more pain and aren't doing anything to stop the spread of COVID.” (image of letter) – Governor Kristi Noem (R-SD)
 - “Proud to stand for freedom!” (Image of letter) – Governor Kim Reynolds (R-IA)
 - “What's happening in Canada should alarm us all.” - Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA-14)
 - “This morning I was on @FoxBusiness to discuss current administration's federal gas tax and my stance on the Canadian government pushing the vaccine mandate for cross-border truck drivers. This is a misguided policy.” – Governor Mike Dunleavy (R- Alaska)

International copycat actions and reactions

5. **Texas (Feb. 17):** U.S Senator Ted Cruz weighed in on the situation in Canada on February 16 by reposting a tweet by #DefiantL. The nameless account, infamous for posting side-by-side screenshots to show alleged hypocrisy from outstanding left-wing personalities, had amassed 350,000 followers earlier than its suspension. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said on February 9 that his

office will investigate GoFundMe for blocking and withholding donations already made to the platform through its website. Removing the campaign from its site could violate the state's Deceptive Trade Practices Act, he said.



6. **Louisiana (Feb. 16):** U.S. Senator John Kennedy (R) commented in length on the situation in a Fox News interview on February 15th. Senator Kennedy's assessment of the government response was negative, directing his criticism toward Prime Minister Trudeau. Attorney General Jeff Landry issued a statement via Twitter on February 5th saying that his office will be investigating GoFundMe's decision to halt donations to the trucker convoys. The AG also told Louisiana donors to contact his office through the consumer protection division.
7. **Arkansas (Feb. 16):** Attorney General Leslie Rutledge also issued a similar statement announcing an investigation into GoFundMe's decision and asked donors to file complaints. Rutledge also included the following quote: *"GoFundMe has tried to decide what is and is not a worthy cause based on its skewed political bias without any regard to the Arkansans who have given their hard earned money to support this effort, GoFundMe is contributing to the cancel culture that has unfairly caused so much harm, and I will not stand for its hasty and possibly illegal revocation or diversion of donations."* U.S. Senator John Boozman (R), the top Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee, told reporters on February 10th that the blockade of the Ambassador Bridge on the U.S.-Canada border was concerning.
8. **Switzerland (Feb. 16):** Une seule véritable tentative d'imitation a été faite à Berne, mais sans succès. Le 7 février, la police a établi un périmètre de sécurité autour du Parlement fédéral afin d'empêcher une occupation par un convoi inspiré par ceux au Canada, mais ce dernier s'est rapidement désintégré. Étant donné les annonces fédérales d'hier quant à la fin pratique de la pandémie en Suisse et un relâchement quasi total des mesures sanitaires, de tels convois ne sont pas envisageables dans les jours ou semaines à venir. Il est aussi fort improbable que le gouvernement suisse prenne position sur les manifestations de camionneurs au Canada. La une du 8 février du plus important quotidien francophone de Suisse (ci-dessous) est l'exemple le plus criant de la couverture

de cette nouvelle en Suisse.



s.38

10. Wellington, NZ (Feb. 17): At a press conference, PM Ardern stated that “what is happening at Parliament is illegal.” There would come a point when NZ could move away from restrictions, but “right now is not that time.” Throughout the pandemic response there had been calls from different quarters to remove restrictions, and this protest is the “current incarnation” of that. Ardern also suggested the protest in Wellington is influenced by similar events abroad: “I understand that in Canada there has been an issue over whether or not there's financing that is from outside of their domestic jurisdiction. I think there are questions to be raised on what feels very much like an imported protest and activity outside”. Four NZ Defence Force vehicles that could help with towing have arrived in Wellington, but no decision has been made about whether they will be used. Minister Joly had a call on Feb.16 with her NZ counterpart, and the issue was raised.

11. Canada Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) Open Data Analysis (Feb. 17)

- RRM Canada has not observed any significant indicators of foreign state-sponsored interference as it relates to the “Truckers Convoy”. Prominent

- discussions online about the “Truckers Convoy” have continued to shift, now overlapping with those related to the emergency measures act.
- A significant portion of engagement and activity continues to come from US online communities, driven by key US influencers, alternative media and political actors. Given the transnational nature of this discussion, it is difficult to determine exact metrics, but analysis indicates a clear interest among various US communities, including those sympathising with protesters, conspiracy-minded groups, and ideologically motivated networks.
- International networks and state-aligned media (e.g., those aligned with the s.38 governments) continue to engage in the “Truckers Convoy” discussion. These discussions focus on a number of themes including: claims of Canadian hypocrisy, questioning Canada’s commitment to the rule of law, and sympathising with protesters. This continues to operate at low levels compared with overall activity.

Prepared by NGA/Marc-André Pharand
With input from WSHDC/PA; IOL & US/global mission network
Reviewed: NGA/S.Beaulieu
Approved: NGM/M.Grant

U.S. Media coverage (abbreviated, full article attached)

Shutting Down Support for the Truckers

Wall Street Journal, Editorial Board, February 17, 2022

Donors to Canada’s ‘freedom convoy’ are harassed and boycotted. ‘Donor transparency’ is a fixation of Democrats such as Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse and others on the left who bemoan the influence of “dark money”—not their own money but others’. Canada is now offering a preview of what that transparency would mean for political speech.

Opinion Piece: There’s a Reason Trump Loves the Truckers

New York Times, Thomas B. Edsall, February 17, 2022

In this opinion piece, Thomas Edsall argues that the Canadian Truckers “Freedom Convoy” is a consequence of the growing social divide in western democracies, mostly between rural values and urban values. He further argues that there are risks and opportunities on both sides. For President Biden, a protest that brings traffic and commerce to a standstill in the nation’s capital would test his skill as the country’s chief executive, a test that could restore his faltering public image or send him on the road to defeat in 2024. For Trump and his allies on the right, such a protest could mobilize core voters going into the coming elections, or it could reinforce the Jan. 6 image of unconstrained chaos, severely damaging Republican prospects.

Canadian Truckers Polarize American Commentators

The Atlantic, Conor Friedersdorf, February 17, 2022

This article goes over the range of comments made in U.S. media outlets on the Canadian truckers protests. It shows how the U.S. polarization is playing a role in framing the protests on the right and left of the political spectrum.

Ottawa police presence grows as chief vows to ‘take back’ city from ‘Freedom Convoy’ protesters

Washington Post, Miriam Berger, Amanda Coletta and Ellen Francis, February 17, 2022

Police in Canada’s capital pledged to clamp down “in the coming days” on the self-styled “Freedom Convoy” protesters who have dug in despite warnings of arrests.vThe blockades at the U.S.-Canada border crossings that disrupted traffic and trade have been cleared. But in Ottawa, demonstrators

protesting vaccine mandates and the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau continue to jam city streets. Official urgency is growing to forestall a fourth weekend of raucous protests that authorities have called an illegal occupation.

Police warn Ottawa protesters to leave or face criminal charges.

New York Times, Dan Bilefsky, Sarah Maslin Nir and Ian Austen, 16 February 2022

Police on Wednesday ordered protesters clogging Ottawa's streets to leave or face criminal charges, appearing to set the stage for a clampdown on the demonstrations that have roiled the nation's capital for weeks.

An activist who has advocated secession by western provinces becomes the public face of the Canada protests.

New York Times, Sarah Maslin Nir and Dan Bilefsky, 16 February 2022

She is a former fitness instructor who has sung and played guitar in a band called "Blind Monday" in Medicine Hat, Alberta. She was a senior member of a splinter party that advocated for Canada's Western provinces to secede from the country.

Canada Police Step Up Warning to Freedom Convoy Protesters

Wall Street Journal, Paul Vieira and Kim Mackrael, 16 February 2022

Ottawa police officers visited hundreds of heavy-duty trucks and other vehicles parked downtown and in front of the national legislature Wednesday, delivering notices to their owners and other protesters demanding they leave a demonstration zone immediately or face arrest and criminal charges.

What Trudeau Can and Can't Do With Emergency Powers

Bloomberg, Brian Platt and Theophilos Argitis, 16 February 2022

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau invoked emergency powers to quell protests over coronavirus restrictions that have brought gridlock to Canada's capital and blocked key trade corridors, citing the need to restore public order. It's the first time a federal government has resorted to such powers in five decades.

Ottawa police warn occupiers: 'Leave now'

Politico, Andy Blatchford, 16 February 2022

Police are warning convoy protesters to leave Ottawa or face arrest.

Truckers end US border blockade, siege in Ottawa goes on

Associated Press, Rob Gillies, 16 February 2022

Ottawa police trying to break the nearly three-week siege of the capital by truckers protesting Canada's COVID-19 restrictions began warning Wednesday drivers to leave immediately or risk arrest.

International coverage (abbreviated)

Protest presents a diabolical challenge for PM

Stuff.co.nz, Ben Thomas, Feb. 17

In an [opinion piece](#) on the political risks posed to Ardern by the protests, centre-right commentator Ben Thomas said she will be "taking a moment to glance at the experience of her almost-contemporary Justin Trudeau". Thomas notes that the trucking convoy protests in Canada were a "blueprint" for the Wellington action. He is critical of the Canadian PM's reaction at the arrival of the convoy. He further opines that some of the "quieter and more sympathetic elements" of the protest are a reminder of the fallout from what he considers a "rushed implementation" of the NZ government's Covid Protection Framework, notably vaccine passes and mandates.

NZ Police Association Pres: Protesters could be there three months

Newstalk ZB, Publish Date Thu, 17 Feb 2022

Chris Cahill, President of the NZ Police Association (the police force's union) said he expects the protest camp to still be in place in three months' time. He said the priority should be on moving the vehicles that are blocking businesses and "stopping New Zealanders going about their business".

Sur les traces de son père, Justin Trudeau menace le Canada de mesures d'urgence: la presse s'étrangle

Le Temps, Olivier Perrin, 15 février 2022

La ruée dans les brancards du premier ministre fédéral met les médias du pays dans l'embarras. Ceux-ci critiquent vertement le flicage accru de provinces qui perdent de leur pouvoir démocratique parce que jugées incapables d'agir.

Le Canada invoque une loi d'exception

Le Temps, Ludovic Hirtzmann, 15 février 2022

Le gouvernement canadien prend des mesures exceptionnelles pour résoudre la crise avec ses camionneurs opposés à l'obligation vaccinale, après plus de deux semaines de blocage.